

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of performing ~~surgery~~ total knee arthroplasty on a patient's knee, the method comprising, in the following order:

suspending a distal portion of a patient's leg from the knee;
forming an incision of about 13 cm or less;
positioning a cutting guide member against the in alignment with a bone of the knee;
cutting a bone of at least the first and second condyles of the knee with a cutting tool while the distal portion of the patient's leg is suspended from the knee, including
said step of cutting includes initiating a cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along a guide surface of the guide member to form a cut surface,
angularly disposing the cutting tool along the guide surface in order to cut a section of the bone wider than the width of the guide, at least a portion of said cut section of bone being located in the interior of the body with respect to the incision,
removing the guide member from against the bone, and then completing a skim the cut of the section of bone, while guiding the cutting tool along the cut in the cut section surface; and
positioning a total knee replacement component against the cut bone of the knee, wherein cutting the bone includes cutting first and second condyles of the bone, wherein the length of the skim cut is at least as long as the distance between the first and second condyles of the bone, and
wherein the skim cut has a dimension in a direction parallel to a central axis of the guide surface which is greater than the distance between opposite ends of longer than the guide surface of the guide member, and
wherein bone may be prepared for a total knee arthroplasty through an incision size substantially less wide than the longest width of bone to be cut, and using a guide surface substantially shorter than the longest width of bone to be cut.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein positioning the total knee replacement component includes positioning a first portion of the total knee replacement against the cut bone, and subsequently positioning a second portion of the total knee replacement component against the same cut bone.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 4 further including the step of substantially immovably connecting the first and second portions of the total knee replacement component together after both portions have been positioned within the body, against the cut bone.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein further including~~ suspending the distal portion of the patient's leg from the knee, including ~~includes~~ bending the knee to a flexed condition, and cutting the bone of the knee ~~includes cutting the bone of the knee~~ while the knee is bent in the flexed condition.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6 wherein bending the knee includes hyperflexing the knee by moving a bone on one side of a joint anteriorly with respect to a bone on the other side of the joint, whereby additional working space is created within the joint, and cutting the bone of the knee includes cutting the bone of the knee while the knee is hyperflexed.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including distracting the knee while the distal portion of the patient's leg is suspended from the knee, and wherein at least one of the steps of cutting the bone and positioning the total knee replacement component is performed while the knee is distracted.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including displacing a patella of the knee.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 further including cutting the patella while the patella is displaced.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the patella is displaced with an inner side of the patella remaining facing inward.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the inner side of the patella remains facing inward during the cutting and positioning steps.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including everting a patella of the knee.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 further including cutting the patella while the patella is everted.

15. (Currently amended) A method of performing a total knee arthroplasty surgery on a patient's joint, the method comprising, in the following order:

forming an incision of about 13 cm or less;

positioning a cutting guide member at least part ways through the incision, against a bone of the joint, the guide member having a guide surface;

~~positioning a cutting tool in association with the guide surface of the guide member;~~

initiating a cut in the bone while guiding ~~the~~ a cutting tool along the guide surface to form a cut surface, at least a portion of said cut bone being located in the interior of the body with respect to the incision;

removing the guide member from against the bone of the joint;

positioning the cutting tool through the incision, and continuing the cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along the cut surface, ~~said step of continuing the cut being performed after said step of removing the guide member;~~

positioning a first portion of a total knee replacement component against ~~the~~ cut bone of one side of a joint, and subsequently positioning a second portion of the total knee replacement component against the cut bone on the same side of the joint; and

~~connecting~~ affixing the first and second portions of the total knee replacement component together after both portions have been positioned against the cut bone within the body, each of the first and second portions of the total knee replacement component having an articulating surface;

wherein bone may be prepared for a total knee arthroplasty through an incision size substantially less wide than the longest width of bone to be cut, and using a guide surface substantially shorter than the longest width of bone to be cut.

16-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 further including the step of suspending a distal portion of a patient's extremity connected with the joint, ~~and initiating the cut and completing the cut are performed while the distal portion of the patient's extremity connected with the joint is suspended.~~

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 further including the step of distracting the joint, and wherein at least one of the steps of positioning the guide member, positioning the cutting tool, initiating the cut, and completing the cut is performed with the joint distracted.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 wherein initiating the cut and ~~completing~~ continuing the cut are performed on a condyle of the bone, ~~and further including positioning a partial joint replacement component against the cut condyle of the bone.~~

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 wherein initiating the cut and completing the cut are performed on both condyles of the bone, ~~and further including positioning a total joint replacement component against the cut condyles of the bone.~~

23. (Original) The method of claim 15 further including completing the cut while guiding the cutting tool along the cut surface.

24. (Original) The method of claim 15 further including removing the guide member from the bone before continuing the cut.

25. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the guide surface comprises a guide slot and the step of positioning a cutting tool includes inserting the cutting tool into the guide slot.

26. (Currently amended) A method of performing a total knee arthroplasty joint replacement surgery on a leg of a patient, including cutting away a portion of bone of the joint, the method comprising:

forming an incision having a long dimension of about 13 cm or less, and a width substantially less than the length;

positioning aligning a cutting guide member against with a bone of a knee the joint in the leg of the patient, the guide member having opposite ends with a transverse dimension which is less than a distance between medial and lateral epicondyles of an end portion of the bone the width of a portion of bone to be cut away;

positioning a cutting tool in association with a guide surface of the guide member;

initiating a cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along the guide surface to form a cut surface;

angularly disposing the cutting tool along the guide surface in order to cut a section of the bone wider than the width of the guide, the swath of the angularly disposed cut being formed at an angle to the long dimension of the incision, and defining a width substantially greater than the width of the incision, at least a portion of said cut being located in the interior of the body with respect to the incision; and

continuing the cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along the cut surface,

wherein both medial and lateral condyles of the end portion of the bone are cut by the cutting tool and wherein the guide member is removed from against the bone of the knee joint prior to said step of continuing the cut in the bone

wherein bone may be prepared for a total knee replacement through an incision size substantially less wide than the longest width of bone to be cut, and using a guide surface substantially shorter than the longest width of bone to be cut.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26 further including positioning an implant against the cut bone.

28. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27 wherein the joint is a knee, and the transverse dimension of the opposite ends of the guide member is less than two-thirds the distance between the medial and lateral epicondyles of the end portion of the bone.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28 wherein the guide member is mounted to the bone and offset from a central longitudinal axis of the bone.

30. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the joint is a knee, and the guide member is intramedullary mounted to the bone.

31. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the joint is a knee, and the guide member is extramedullary mounted to the bone.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said guide is operative when at least half of the guide body is disposed laterally to a line defining the longitudinal axis of the bone to be cut.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said guide is operative when at least one end is positioned between the skin and the bone to be cut.

34. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the guide is less wide than the width of the incision.

35. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the swath of the angularly disposed cut is formed at about right angles to the long dimension of the incision.

36. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the joint is a knee, and the longest dimension of the incision is about 10 cm or less.